Sarah Trowd

157

FEMALE RESTORATION.

[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.]

BRITISH MUSEUM
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A.R

1601 | 580.

FEMALE RESTORATION,

BY A

MORAL AND PHYSICAL

VINDICATION

OF

FEMALE TALENTS;

IN OPPOSITION TO ALL DOGMATICAL ASSERTIONS

RELATIVE TO

DISPARITY IN THE SEXES.

DEDICATED TO HER MAJESTY;

AND HUMBLY ADDRESSED TO THE

LADIES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

BY A LADY. (Mrs E. Hayley)

LONDON:

SOLD ONLY AT FREE-MASONS COFFEE-HOUSE, GREAT QUEEN-STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS; AND J. MACGOWAN'S, No. 27, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M,DCC,LXXX.

1601 | 580

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY;

IT is with the profoundeſt and moſt humble reſpect, that I preſume to approach your ſacred Perſon, to lay my ſlender tribute at your Royal feet, in the ſimple garb of truth and humility; without copying the ſtile of fulſome Dedicators, by recapitulating your Royal Titles, which are already univerſally known and acknowledged; which, inſtead of illuſtrating, would only throw a ſhade on thoſe virtues with which your Majeſty ſo confeſſedly ſhines conſpicuous every day of your life, as an honour to the Sex, and a glorious precedent to the lateſt poſterity.

A Moral and Phyſical Vindication of Female Talents, can never be handed to poſterity under more glorious auſpices; it is, therefore, committed to thoſe condeſcending Royal feelings, which are never weary of doing good, whoſe future reward is in the hand of the Sovereign of Sovereigns, and whoſe preſent ſatisfaction muſt be exquiſite, from knowing that all voices are unanimous in prayer for the health of your Majeſty, and welfare of your promiſing Offspring, which ſhall be the never failing practice of, MADAM,

YOUR MAJESTY'S

MOST OBSEQUIOUS, MOST DEVOTED, AND

MOST DUTIFUL SERVANT AND SUBJECT,

THE AUTHORESS.

TO THE

LADIES

OF

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

LADIES;

AS you are the natural patroneſſes of this work, I ſhall make no apology for laying it at your feet, and imploring your protection.

ALL panegyric upon your virtues and qualifications are needleſs here, as the greateſt proof of your poſſeſſing them, is your reſolution of heroically ſupporting your pretenſions and claim to them.

THE ſycophantic flattery of dedicators is entirely laid aſide; here are nothing but ſimple truth and plain honeſty to attract your approbation; but then your intereſt is ſo immediately connected with the ſucceſs of this work, that by letting it remain in obſcurity, you give up all title to a competition with the men in learning, ſenſe, and fame.

DEDICATION.

I HAVE ruſhed forth champion of your cauſe, without ſubſidies—without ſuccours—with ſcarce a troop of well muſtered ideas I have taken the field, and (I flatter myſelf) have gained ſuch advantages over the enemy, that, if you will but properly ſecond my efforts, they will not have a ſingle fortreſs left in all the extent of ſuperiority.

To quit the figure, upon you, Ladies, it depends; to recover your uſurped rights and poſſeſſions; to regain your juſt and natural authority. In order to ſucceed, you muſt ſtrenuouſly ſupport the doctrine of this piece, and the rectitude of its maxims; which are neither oppoſite to nature, reaſon, or experience, but coincide with all.

IT were needleſs to add more to recommend this Work to your patronage, which it ſo juſtly claims. I am, with a thorough ſenſe of your merit,

LADIES,

YOUR MOST OBEDIENT,

AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,

THE AUTHORESS.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE novelty and daringneſs of this performance, cannot avoid drawing upon me the attention of the Female World, and the criticiſms of the Male. To endeavour refuting an opinion of ſo long ſtanding, as that of the ſuperiority of the men over the women, with reſpect to genius and abilities, muſt appear to many a ſtrange and impracticable attempt; and numbers, even of women, miſled by prejudice and cuſtom, may believe no one would be ſo Quixotic as to liſt herſelf champion of the Sex upon this occaſion; and that therefore this is nothing more than a ludicrous performance, to turn the Women into greater ridicule, and make them appear more contemptible than ever. But this is far from being the caſe. A ſerious addreſs to reaſon and good ſenſe, a thorough diſquiſition of the ſource and progreſs of that empire the men have aſſumed over us, and the cauſe of our preſent ſtate of ſubjection, with moral and phyſical reaſons to prove our natural equality with the men in every thing, are what compoſe the ſubſtance of the following ſheets.

IT is true, that to arrive at this, two powerful adverſaries muſt be ſubdued; the vulgar, and almoſt all the learned. But the

firſt

firſt having no other foundation for their opinion than cuſtom and ſlight appearances, it is eaſily refuted, by pointing out in what manner the Sex were reduced to the ſtate of dependence we now ſee them in, and thereby excluded an acquaintance with the ſciences, and a participation of places of emolument; that their natural genius is ſuited for receiving any knowledge, and their abilities for filling any employment.

The ſentiments of the learned muſt neceſſarily ſuccumb where they oppoſe truth and reaſon, which are the only champions in this cauſe: they combat againſt cuſtom, prejudice, and long preſcription; formidable opponents, it is true, yet impartiality will always ajudge them the laurel.

However extraordinary ſuch a deciſion may appear, if we recur to hiſtory, we ſhall not be ſurpriſed that the ſex ſhould contend with the men for virtue, valour, learning, prudence, patriotiſm, or any of the moſt ſhining ornaments the latter can lay claim to.

The Amazons, who were natives of Scythia, having loſt their huſbands in war, took up arms, and demonſtrated the greateſt valour and heroiſm in poſſeſſing themſelves of Aſia, where they built the city of Epheſus. Hercules and Theſeus declared war againſt them, and defeated them; but this defeat tended more to their glory than their former conqueſts; for after having made a great and courageous reſiſtance againſt thoſe famous heroes, they were taken priſoners, when they killed their centinels who guarded them, and made their eſcape. Strabo and Palæphatus, indeed, deny there ever was ſuch a people; but we have the authority of Pliny and Pomponius Mela, who aſſert, that in Scythia the women governed, who were called Amazons. Juſtin has particularly

cularly treated of them in his hiſtory; and ſeveral creditable authors agree that they burnt their left breaſts, in order to uſe their bow with greater facility; that they made war againſt Priam, whom they afterwards ſuccoured at the ſiege of Troy; that they made an incurſion into Attica, to avenge the carrying off their queen by Theſeus; that the name of their capital city was Themiſcyra, in Cappadocia, ſeated near the famous river Thermodon. The city of Epheſus, with the temple of Diana, the cities of Smyrna, Thiatyria, Cumea, and Magneſia, were founded by theſe celebrated warlike women.

Modern hiſtorians tell us, that upon the Caucaſus there are a people, among whom are great numbers of female warriors, who make incurſions in Muſcovy, and wage war againſt the Calmucks. That to this day, there is a kingdom in Africa compoſed of nothing but women, who kill all the boys they bring forth, and train up their girls to military exploits.

But to dwell no longer upon hiſtorical authorities that admit of the leaſt doubt, there are heroines which all writers, both moral and profane, agree to have exiſted. Amongſt theſe is Judith, the wife of an obſcure man, who delivered the city of Bethulia when beſieged, and preſerved her fellow citizens from impending ruin. This is her ſtory: Whilſt the city was attacked by Holofernes, general of king Nabachodonoſor's army, ſhe went gaily dreſt into the enemy's camp, pretending ſhe flew there for refuge: a few days after, Holofernes being ſmote with her beauty, ordered her to be brought into his tent to ſatisfy his luſtful appetite; but having, upon this occaſion, drank more freely than uſual, ſhe profited of the opportunity to cut off his head, and returned the ſame night with it into the city, where ſhe exhorted her fellow citizens to make a ſally upon the enemy, which was

immediately reſolved upon and executed, when the beſiegers, greatly intimidated at the unexpected death of their leader, flew before the Jews on every ſide.

The propheteſs Deborah, who was eſteemed more courageous than any man of her time, defeated, with Barach, the Chanaanæans, conducted by Siſara, and thereby delivered the people of Iſrael from the ſtate of ſervitude, in which they had been upwards of twenty years. Jahel, another woman, participated alſo of this glory.

Jeptha, being upon the point of giving the enemy battle, made a vow to ſacrifice whatever came firſt in his way, if he returned victorious: having gained the battle, his only daughter was the firſt perſon he met upon his return, who came to congratulate him upon his victory: reſolved to fulfil his vow, he did not ſpare her; and this innocent victim, far from being diſpleaſed at his ſeverity, exhorted him to accompliſh his oath, aſking only two months to prepare herſelf, when ſhe appeared, and her father ſacrificed her.

Clelia, a Roman young lady, who was given as an hoſtage to the Tuſcans, when Porſena attempted to re-eſtabliſh the Tarquins upon the throne, having put herſelf at the head of a troop of other girls, cheated her guard, and ſwam acroſs the Tiber, though fired upon on every ſide by the enemy.

Porcia, daughter of Cato, and wife to Brutus, upon hearing of her huſband's death, heroically reſolved not to ſurvive him, and killed herſelf by ſwallowing burning coals.

Odenatus,

Odenatus, king of Palmyra, took up arms in favour of Gallienus againſt Macrinus, who had revolted in the Eaſt, and he periſhed; but his wife Zenobia conquered the empire in the Eaſt after the death of her huſband. Hiſtorians agree that her beauty, her learning, and her military ſkill, in vain contended to ſuperiorly ſignalize her; they united to form that heroine, who marched at the head of the army, and jointly commanded with her huſband, and after his death crowned her virtues with ſuch a memorable conqueſt.

Nor ſhould the Maid of Orleans, though accuſed of ſorcery, be omitted among the warlike women; ſhe commanded the French troops and obliged the Engliſh to raiſe the ſiege of that city, when the greateſt part of the inhabitants of France had already decided in their favour, and there was ſcarce any oppoſition to their reducing the whole kingdom.

These are women whoſe heroiſm, courage, and even ſucceſs, are equal to any feats the men can lay claim to: all hiſtorians coincide in giving them their due, and their greateſt eulogy is a mere recital of their actions.

Those famed for virtue, and particularly chaſtity, are not leſs numerous, than the heroines and patriots. To mention a few—— Lucretia, daughter to Tricipitinus, and Collatinus's wife, was ſurpriſed in her chamber by Sextus Tarquinius, who threatened her with immediate death, then to place a dead ſlave by the ſide of her, and publiſh to the world that he found him in the act of adultery with her, if ſhe refuſed to conſent to his luſtful deſires; rather than this infamy ſhould be brought upon her family, the falſehood of which none would be able to diſcover, ſhe let herſelf be raviſhed; but the next day ſhe convened her father, her brother, and all her relations, to whom ſhe related what had happened, and

then

then killed herſelf in their preſence. The Roman government was by this accident changed, for her relations and friends being irritated to the higheſt degree at this inſult, drove Tarquin out of the city, and with him expelled the name of king, in whoſe ſtead two conſuls were elected.

PONTIA, a Roman lady, could neither be tempted by promiſes or threats to tranſgreſs her conjugal vow, and preferred being killed by Octavius, one of the tribunes of the people, rather than commit adultery with him.

SOPHRONIA, that illuſtrious Roman matron, who was called the Chriſtian Lucretia, for her great chaſtity, ſeeing herſelf at the devotion of the tyrant Maxentius, after having aſked leave of her huſband, and pardon of God, for what ſhe was going to execute, killed herſelf to preſerve her virtue unſullied. To theſe may be added Suſannah, whoſe virtue was proof againſt corruption, and whoſe judges had therefore bribed falſe witneſſes to get her condemned to die; but Daniel the prophet having proved the falſity of their evidence from their own words, the witneſſes were ſtoned according to the laws of Talion, and Suſannah was juſtified.

THE learned Sappho, wrote nine books of Lyric verſe, beſides epigrams, elegies, and other detached pieces of poetry. There was another woman of this name, famous for poetry, born at Mytilena, capital of the Iſle of Leſbos. She was enamoured with Phaon, who deſpiſed her, but whom ſhe nevertheleſs followed into Sicily, where ſhe threw herſelf into the ſea and was drowned. Her natural genius, equal to any thing, was embelliſhed with a great ſhare of learning, and ſhe was called the tenth muſe. Of all the works which ſhe compoſed, though very numerous, there only remains an hymn to Venus, and an ode ſhe wrote upon one

of

of her female friends. She invented two ſorts of verſe known by the names of the Eloic and the Saphic.

Eudocia, daughter to Leo, an Athenian philoſopher, married the emperor Theodoſius II. She was endowed with a great ſhare of natural ſenſe, with all the advantages of corporal ſymetry; very religious and much given to the reading of ſacred books, particularly poetry, in which ſhe excelled. The moſt remarkable of her productions were her verſions of ſeveral of the hiſtories of the Old Teſtament.

Proba Falconia, a Roman proconſul's wife, arrived at a great proficiency in the Greek and Latin languages, was deeply verſed in the holy writings and in poetry; ſhe turned ſeveral of the books of the Old and New Teſtament into verſe, which were much eſteemed; and left many other learned productions.

These are ſome of thoſe ſhining ornaments of hiſtory, which authoriſe us to claim an equality with the men in all thoſe virtues and accompliſhments which have rendered mankind famous in every age.

If under the oppreſſive tyranny of the men, we have been able to give ſuch ſtriking inſtances of our fortitude, chaſtity, and abilities for learning; how much more conſpicuous might we have expected to find the glorious actions of the Sex, had we been in every thing upon a footing with them; opportunities equally favourable to acquire, and occaſions equally frequent to teſtify our knowledge and our ſkill: in all that is immediately dependent upon ourſelves, how greatly ſuperior do we appear even under our diſadvantages. The goodneſs of our heart, and our virtuous diſpoſition are ever tranſcendent. Let our opponents ſearch all hiſtories ancient and modern, and produce ſuch inſtances of chaſtity

in the men, as have here been promiſcuouſly cited. If Joſeph refuſed his miſtreſs's embraces, may we not rather attribute it to his gratitude for his maſter, than to his conſummate chaſtity? and if Scipio Africanus, at the taking of New Carthage, had prudence enough to abſtain from the enjoyment of the beautiful priſoner who was brought him, is there not reaſon to imagine his ambition conquered his luſt, and that he ſubdued one paſſion by the indulgence of a greater?

With reſpect to Holy Writ, there is not a paſſage in this Work that anywiſe claſhes with it. The Scripture does not mention a word of inequality between the ſexes. If it be aſked why God began to make man before woman? this ſimple anſwer may ſuffice: it was his will, and it has not been thought proper to give us any reaſon for it. Upon this occaſion, as upon many others, all unauthoriſed deductions from the Holy Scripture, to give a ſanction to whimſical propoſitions, ſhould be avoided. As no reaſon is there aſſigned for it, and as we are told that man and woman are the images of God, why ſhould we ſuppoſe he eſteems one more than the other?

If it be added, that Eve was not only created after Adam, but was formed out of one of his ribs: agreed; but Adam was made of clay; is that a reaſon that clay was more noble than him? our antagoniſts may, perhaps, go on—"God would not form woman "out of the head of man, for fear ſhe ſhould equal him in ſenſe; "nor out of his feet for fear he ſhould deſpiſe her too much; but of "one of his ribs, to ſhew her ſhe ſhould conſider him as her chief "and her maſter." To this may be anſwered, with much greater reaſon, "that Eve was formed of one of Adam's ribs to teach them "they ſhould go hand in hand, and by the ſide of each other."

After

After all, this argument can only relate to Eve, other women being no wife indebted to their husbands for their creation, and do not pretend to be of a more perfect nature than their children, though they contribute to their production in a quite different manner from Adam, with respect to Eve.

Thus much was thought necessary, with respect to our first creation, to anticipate the cavillers, and all the futile arguments they might oppose to our original equality.

Corporal distinction may at first, perhaps, have the greatest weight in the argument against us. This must relate to strength, and the inconveniences of child-bearing: with respect to the first, every one knows it is greatly increased by exercise, and that if the women used as much as the men, though they might not in general be able to carry such great burthens as them, they would, at least, be strong enough to undergo all the fatigues of business, or war. If this be allowed, it is sufficient, as I have no intention of conferring upon my Sex the honourable employment of porters.

In regard to child-bearing, it may be only necessary to remark, that in America and the greatest part of Africa, where the women work like the men, pregnancy does not prevent them. They deliver themselves in the middle of a wood or a field; they afterwards wash themselves and their children in the next rivulet, carry them home without wrapping them up, leave them and return to their work more freely than before.

It may be proper to acquaint the Reader in this place, that though all loose thoughts have been properly excluded from the following sheets, they are not replenished with dry reflections and tedious researches. Our adversaries furnish us with an ample field for ridicule;

ridicule; to think they have been five thouſand years ſearching after truth;—that to this are conſecrated their whole lives, their fortunes, and their pleaſures; that they are furniſhed with ſtupendous arſenals and magazines, amply filled with the crops of all their learned predeceſſors; it is pleaſant to inquire what advantages they or ſociety have reaped? why chimeras, prejudices, errors, ſects, diviſions, ſuperſtition! are not theſe ſolid advantages? it is true, they have frequently interrupted the general tranquillity of the world, and been the ſpring of rivers of blood; but then the intent was good; truth, nought but truth was the object! poor weak women have been debarred from theſe reſearches, and they have had little or no hand in all the revolutions of empires, and the repeated maſſacres of mankind; they are therefore deſpiſed! but where is truth all this while? why at the bottom of a well, where nobody can deſcend! they have been theſe five thouſand years finding out that—they know nothing.

Is it not diverting to think, that after theſe repeated and univerſally approved determinations, the men ſhould pique themſelves upon their knowledge, and deride the women for their ignorance?

FEMALE

FEMALE TALENTS

VINDICATED.

MANKIND are perſuaded to believe an infinite number of things for which they can give no reaſon; their conviction is founded upon trifling appearances, and the oppoſite opinion would have as eaſily prevailed, if cuſtom had authoriſed it, or their intellects had been firſt impreſſed with its idea.

It was but the other day, comparatively ſpeaking, that all the world believed, and indeed to have not believed, would have been ſubſcribing one's ſelf a ſceptical idiot, that the ſun revolved round the earth. Now, this opinion is exploded, and philoſophers, thoſe mental tyrants, force us to embrace the oppoſite ſyſtem. The Julian calendar, after being approved for upwards of ſeventeen hundred years, was at length found erroneous, and the Gregorian, ſo long rejected, legally authoriſed and received.

When the Europeans firſt conquered America, the ſavages ſeeing numbers of their countrymen fall by their ſides, readily imagined the efficient cauſe of death was in the muſkets that were diſcharged, and when they paſſed by theſe mechanical butchers,

failed not to beſeech them to ſpare them. They have certainly been diſabuſed ere now, as the numbers of our brave countrymen, that have lately fallen by the Indians in the French intereſt, too clearly demonſtrate.

Every one thinks his own country the beſt, becauſe he is moſt uſed to it, and the religion in which he was brought up the only orthodox, though, perhaps, he never took the leaſt pains to inquire into it, or compare it with others.

Were we inclined to inveſtigate the cauſe of theſe different opinions, we ſhould find them centered in intereſt or cuſtom; and it is infinitely more difficult to rectify ſuch ſentiments as are formed by prejudice, than to alter thoſe which the moſt convincing reaſons eſtabliſh.

To theſe judgments may be added, the vulgar opinion of a diſparity between the ſexes, and all that relates to them. It is as ancient as it is univerſal; and the ſage and ignoramus, are ſo ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with the notion, that the women are inferior to the men, as well in capacity as merit, and that they ſhould remain in that ſtate of dependence we now ſee them, that the oppoſite ſentiment cannot at firſt fail to appear a very ſingular paradox.

It would, however, be needleſs to make uſe of any ſolid argument to eſtabliſh this opinion, if the men were more equitable, and their judgment leſs biaſſed by intereſt. As the caſe now ſtands, we muſt fathom the argument, and, in convincing them of our equality, demonſtrate to them their own weakneſs and inſignificance.

Ask

Ask a man his opinion of the women in general, and he readily anſwers, (if he ſpeaks from his heart) we were made for his uſe and convenience; appropriated to the bringing up of children in their tender years, and the regulation of houſehold economy. Some of a more enlivened turn, may, perhaps, add, that "there "are women who have ſenſe and conduct, but if one critically "examines either, the woman is always diſcovered; that they "have neither prudence or reſolution, devoid of that genuine "ſenſibility with which the men are endowed; and that the will "of Heaven is wiſely executed by the men, in preventing their "dabbling in the ſciences, having any ſhare in the government "of ſtates, or employments of any real importance: that it would "be a fine thing indeed, to hear a woman ſpeak in the houſe, or "plead at the bar! Or how amply ridiculous would it be, to "ſee a lady actually upon the bench, ſumming up the principal "points of argumentation to clear the intellects of a jury! or, turning to the hoſtile field, behold a female general conducting an "army, giving battle to the enemy, or regulating a ſiege."

I acknowledge we might at firſt fill theſe employments ſomething aukwardly, and the tranſition would not a little ſurpriſe;—but this would only be by reaſon of its novelty. If, at the founding of ſtates, and the regulation of the different employments which compoſe them, the women had been allotted their parts, they would have been equally accuſtomed to their execution as the men, and there would have been nothing more wonderful in their vocations.

The laſt reſource of our opponents is, that things have always been, in this reſpect, upon the ſame footing, which is a conviction of the neceſſity of their remaining ſo; and that if women had been proper objects for receiving the culture of ſcience,

or

or filling important employs, they would doubtleſs have made their way to both.

But this argument is founded upon the ſuppoſed equity of the men, and an erroneous opinion foſtered by cuſtom. Is it conſequentially juſt, becauſe it prevails? As it is to be ſuppoſed that men are to be guided by reaſon, it is imagined ſhe dictated rules ſo univerſally received;—but the fault is not to be imputed to her:—the vanity and ambition of men preſcribed, and continue the impoſition.

In all countries the women are, in every reſpect, dependent upon the men, without being able to acquire ſuch lights, or place themſelves in ſuch a ſituation as to be ſignalized by their capacities. No one pretends to have ſeen us more happy, for ſuch has always been the ſtate of things, and it muſt be owned, that our ſituation in England is preferable to any ſpot of the globe. In China, the female infants have their feet compreſſed to ſuch a degree, that they cannot afterwards ſtir out of doors; and at home, they are allowed no other company than that of their huſbands and their children. In Turky they are equally confined: in Italy they are very little better: and in France, by the Salique Law, they are excluded to reign. As to the Aſiatics, the Africans, and the Americans, their wives are their ſervants.

Even in England we are ſubordinate in every thing, except we chance to throw the higheſt caſt; and ſuch odds there are we never reign, that Elizabeth and Anne ſhould be cited upon every occaſion to prove our abilities for governing. The men, our opponents, will not in this caſe allow their favourite maxim, from ſmall things one may judge of great; but, on the contrary, our tenderneſs to, and prudent conduct of our children, and our great

great attention to domeſtic concerns, are cited againſt us as proofs of our unfitneſs for more eligible employments, and that we were ſent into the world for nought elſe; and becauſe it is difficult to put things upon another footing, they pretend it is impoſſible.

The wiſeſt legiſlators in founding their ſtates, have ſettled nothing in favour of the women. Every law tends but to ſupport the men in their unjuſt poſſeſſions. Amongſt the many ſages of antiquity, as well as modern times, who have mentioned the Sex, there is ſcarce one who has ſpoke in their favour. In this reſpect, the conduct of men is ſo analagous in all ages, and in every part of the globe, that one would be inclined to imagine, they have entered into an hereditary and univerſal combination againſt us. It is, indeed, the opinion of many, that they are prompted by inſtinct to oppreſs us. What may induce this latter belief, is the ſuppliant behaviour of the women; they ſeem to look upon their ſituation as natural; whether it be through a defect of properly reflecting upon what they are, or being born and educated in a ſtate of ſubjection, they conſider the evil as irremediable.—This much is certain, there are very few of our Sex who ſo much as pretend to claim an equality with the men, but ſeem to imagine their intellectual capacities are as different as their bodies, and that there ſhould be as much diſtinction in the functions of their lives, as in thoſe of their bodies.

This opinion is nevertheleſs a prejudice, founded, like moſt others, in cuſtom, nurtured by appearances, and matured by neglecting a critical ſearch after truth. In order to arrive at the ſource of this error, we muſt recur to ancient cuſtoms and manners, when we ſhall find that women were compelled to ſubmit to the law of force, and neither the want of intellectual capaci-

ties or real merit on their ſide, ratified the decree, which was as unjuſt as it was deſpotic.

When one conſiders, without prejudice, the ſtate of human affairs, as well with reſpect to the paſt, as the preſent, it muſt be acknowledged, they all concur in one point, that reaſon has always ſubmitted to prejudice, ambition, or intereſt; and one would imagine that hiſtories were only wrote to prove, that in all times, ſince man was man, force has prevailed. The greateſt empires of Aſia were the work of uſurpers and robbers, and the ruins of the Grecian and Roman monarchies were amaſſed by a ſet of men who thought themſelves ſufficiently powerful to oppoſe their maſters, and give laws to their equals. This conduct is not leſs ſtriking in all ſocieties; and if men behave in this manner to each other, is not there ſtill greater reaſon to believe, that they exerted their greateſt power againſt their wives, whom it was ſo much their intereſt to ſubdue?

Is it improbable to ſuppoſe that the men, perceiving they were more robuſt, and had ſome corporal advantage over the women, imagined ſuperiority declared for them in every thing? in the beginning, the concluſion was no way detrimental to us, as things were then upon ſo different a footing to what they are at preſent. There were then no government, no knowledge, no employment, no religion; and of courſe dependance then carried with it no diſagreeable ideas. They lived like children, and their advantages related to their paſtime. The men and women were equally in a ſtate of innocence; their employment was the cultivation of the earth, and their recreation hunting; he or ſhe that was the moſt ſucceſsful was the moſt eſteemed. The inconveniences and conſequences of child-bearing decreaſing the woman's ſtrength for ſome time, and preventing her to work as before, her huſband's aſſiſtance became

became abſolutely neceſſary, and the more ſo when ſhe had preconceived children. Whilſt a family was compoſed of only a father and a mother, and a few little ones, no farther homage than eſteem and complaiſance was expected on the ſide of the man; but when the children grew up, when under the ſame roof were the father and mother, his children and grand-children, the ſtate of dependance was increaſed. The miſtreſs ſubmitted to her huſband, the ſon honoured his father, and the father commanded his children. As brothers ſeldom agree together, one may reaſonably imagine they were not long ſo, but ſeparated in conſequence of their domeſtic jars.

Hence aroſe different ſocieties, at the head of each a governor had elected himſelf. The voluntary dependance which was before approved, was now changed into forced obedience by this deſpotic invaſion. Fathers, mothers, and children, were compelled to ſubmit to the unjuſt uſurpers, and the ſituation of the women was more diſagreeble than before. Till then they had wedded none but relations, who looked upon them and treated them as ſiſters; but henceforward they were forced to marry the greateſt ſtrangers, who regarded them at once as the vanquiſhed, and the choiceſt of the enemy's ſpoils.

It is, alas! but too frequent, that the conquerors deſpiſe the weakeſt of the conquered; and the women appearing to them in this light, on account of their vocations, which demanded leſs ſtrength than thoſe of the men, they were looked upon as their inferiors.

Some were contented with their firſt uſurpation, but others ſtill more ambitious, prompted by their ſucceſs, were diſpoſed to increaſe their conqueſts. The women having too great a ſhare of humanity

humanity to aſſiſt in theſe unjuſt deſigns, they were left at home, and the men, by reaſon of their bodily ſtrength, were preferred for the execution of theſe exploits. In this ſituation, things were no farther eſteemed than they were looked upon as uſeful for attaining the deſired end; and the luſt of dominion having become the moſt prevailing paſſion, which cannot be ſatisfied but by violence and injuſtice, it is not ſurpriſing that the men, being the executive inſtruments, ſhould in this caſe be preferred to the women. They retained the conqueſts they made, and their own councils ratified the tyranny which they themſelves executed. Thus it was that the tenderneſs and ſympathetic feeling of the women debarred them from ſharing in the government of ſtates.

The example of princes was ſoon imitated by their ſubjects. Every one ſtrove to gain the upper hand of his aſſociate, and the dominion of particulars was ſtill more abſolute over their families. When a lord found himſelf maſter of a people, and a conſiderable country, he formed it into a kingdom; he eſtabliſhed laws for the government of it, choſe his officers from amongſt the men, and appointed thoſe to the moſt advantageous employments, who had been the moſt uſeful in advancing his ſchemes. This unjuſt preference of one ſex to the other, made the women leſs reſpected than before, and their diſpoſitions and occupations eſtranging them to all the butchery of war, it was imagined they could be of no farther utility to the preſervation of ſtates, than by aſſiſting to people them.

When temples were built for divine worſhip, ſacrifices were inſtituted, and the men who had already appropriated to themſelves the government of ſtates, failed not alſo to ſeize upon the ſacerdotal offices; and cuſtom having already influenced the women to believe the men were maſters of every thing, they did not

not ſo much as claim any ſhare in eccleſiaſtical power. Such prieſteſſes as were admitted, were ſubordinate to men, and were appointed to impoſe upon the vulgar, who where taught to believe in the fabulous deities of thoſe days.

The women being thus conſecrated to huſbandry and the training up of their children, it is not ſurpriſing they had no ſhare in inventing ſciences. The Egyptian prieſts, who had but little real employment, amuſed themſelves in diſcourſing with one another upon the moſt ſtriking effects of nature: by dint of reaſoning, they made ſuch obſervations as excited the curioſity of foreigners, who repaired into Egypt to be further acquainted with their diſcoveries. The ſciences were then not yet even in their infancy, and the women were not attracted by them from their houſehold concerns; beſide, the jealouſy with which their huſbands were ſo early inſpired, would have made them fancy their wives viſits (had they paid any to theſe prieſts for inſtruction) were thro' an amorous view, rather than that of acquiring knowledge.

Nevertheless, when learning had made ſome advances, we find that many women were equal to the moſt illumined men of their time; but the falſe decorum that ſucceeded, which proſcribed the men, as well as their own ſex, from viſiting them for fear of creating jealouſy, ſhut from them all further avenues to knowledge; and for want of properly rehearſing what they knew, it gradually diminiſhed till it became extinct.

If it be aſked, how the women came to amuſe themſelves with frivolous gewgaws? I ſhall anſwer, the caſe was far different at that period with reſpect to the fate of female acquiſitions in government, ſcience, and learning, and in modes and taſte. In theſe the women participated with the men, who finding us handſomer

than themſelves, approved our ornamenting ourſelves by imitating us; but their occupations calling them off from paying ſo much attention to their perſons as we could, in gaining this ſuperiority, we forced the mens attention, ſoftened their behaviour towards us, and rendered our ſituation more ſupportable than it was before. Thus women, by their addreſs and ingenuity, regained ſome ſmall degree of their natural power.

It evidently appears by this hiſtorical conjecture, conformable to the uſual conduct of men, that they gained by force the empire they have aſſumed over us; for to aſſert that reaſon adjudged it to them, none but the really meritorious men, who have underwent a rigid probation, ſhould claim it. None but thoſe who have talents to improve ſhould be allowed the viſit of the ſciences. None but ſuch as are thoroughly capable of executing, ſhould be admitted to employs. But how oppoſite is experience! chance, intereſt, or neceſſity, decides their vocations. Children follow their father's trade as if a genius for it were hereditary: others are neceſſitated to turn parſons, who would rather fight their way through the world with a red coat and a cockade; and the cleverest man in the world without intereſt or money, may live and die in obſcurity, though he would have been the greateſt ornament to ſociety in the moſt exalted employment.

To carry this remark no farther, let us make this evident concluſion, that women in general are as fit for the offices of ſtate, as thoſe who moſt commonly fill them. All women are not born with great capacities any more than the men; but balance the account, and it will not, at leaſt, poize againſt us.

In order to inveſtigate this laſt point to its ſource, we muſt examine the behaviour of children of both ſexes, when cuſtom and prejudice

prejudice have not warped their diſpoſitions. In girls one may diſcover more eaſe, genius, and addreſs; when fear or ſhame does not ſtifle their ideas, they talk in a more vivacious and agreeable manner than boys; there is more freedom and gaiety in their amuſements; and they attain much quicker any thing that is taught them, when equal pains are taken to inſtruct them: they are more aſſiduous, and have greater patience in performing any exerciſe; are more humble, modeſt, and reſerved: in a word, one may diſcover in them, in a much higher degree, all thoſe excellent qualities which indicate a ſuperior genius.

Notwithstanding theſe favourable prognoſtics in the Female Sex, when they are yet in their cradle, no attention is paid to the nature of their capacities. Tutors and leſſons are confined to the men; the greateſt care is taken to inſtruct them in every thing that may fortify their ſenſe, and regulate their judgment; whilſt the effeminacy of the women is left to increaſe upon them, through idleneſs or ignorance, by the moſt puerile, or the meaneſt vocations. In deſpite of this partiality and preference, the men are every day forced to acknowledge, "The two ſexes reſemble "an elder and younger brother, the latter of whom frequently "teſtifies, notwithſtanding his negligent education, that the other "ſurpaſſes him in nothing but the advantage of being firſt born."

But after all, pray let me aſk any perſon that is not a pedant or a pedagogue, of what great benefit is learning in general to men? It is loſt upon the greateſt part for want of comprehenſion; theſe remain as ignorant as they were, and reap no other advantage from it, than becoming greater fools than before. Others of more diſcernment, immerge into a claſſical ſeries of vice, debauchery, immorality, and profaneneſs; they acquire as much light as obſcures their intellects to all religious belief; decide,

decide, and pretend to refute orthodox points they do not underſtand. In acquiring a ſmattering of Greek, Latin, and Metaphyſics, they give up their God, and countermand their Salvation. Had they ought in them before pleaſant, agreeable, or diverting, it is loſt in the pedant. Every thing diſpleaſes them, and they diſpleaſe every body. Their literary voyage may be compared to a real one among ſavages, from whence they return with all the barbarous manners of the natives. What they have acquired reſembles contraband goods, which they neither dare, or know how to diſpoſe of. If they have a mind to come back to themſelves and the world, the ſchool of the ladies is the only crucible for their tranſmutation, where they are melted down into polite, agreeable, converſable people. The droſs of erudition no longer taints them, and they are rendered fit for ſociety.

When this is maturely conſidered, inſtead of deſpiſing the women for want of learning, they ſhould be reſpected for it. If, on the one hand, they are by this means prevented diſplaying their talents to advantage, on the other, their natural genius is ſecured from being ſpoilt or loſt; and notwithſtanding this privation, their virtue and good ſenſe, their eaſe and affability, increaſe with their age; and if we compare the youths, who juſt ſtart from their ſtudies, with girls of the ſame age, and an equal ſhare of ſenſe, their oppoſite behaviour would induce one to believe, the ladies were juſt come from the univerſity, and the young gentlemen broke looſe from their tapeſtry.

Continue the compariſon between what are called learned men by the world, and ourſelves (ſo univerſally believed) weak, frail women. One would imagine the learning with which their heads are ſtuffed, had blinded their intellects, and confuſed all their ideas.

ideas. How few of them can utter a ſentence with either eaſe or grace! They are ſo attentive to lug in hard words by the head and ſhoulders, that they confound themſelves; repeat the ſame thing a dozen times over, and as often loſe the chain of their diſcourſe; and would not at length be able to finiſh it, if, perhaps, ſome ſenſible, unlearnt female, did not aſſiſt them.

When a woman begins a relation, there is no ſtudied prelude to make it come apropos; no falſe interpretation given to any former diſcourſe, to render it pertinent; but the converſation having naturally introduced her ſtory, ſhe, with an unaffected eaſe, relates it, without being at a ſtand for words, (or queſtioning the authority of ſome, and rejecting others) which flow with a ſpontaneous propriety. The engaging complaiſance with which the women offer their opinion in any argument, proves at once the decency of their conduct, and the juſtneſs of their reaſoning.

Indeed, nature ſeemed to deſtine women for orators; their natural untutored eloquence ſo far ſurpaſſing all the rhetoric and logic of the ſchools. With what graceful eaſe they deliver themſelves! They ſeem by intuition, to chooſe the moſt energic expreſſions; and though they are but ſeldom allowed to ſtudy grammar, their forms of ſpeech are the moſt perfect idioms of their language. When I mention a Cibber or a Pritchard, as public orators, (for ſuch are actreſſes to be conſidered, as the ſtage is the only place where we can diſplay our talents that way) perhaps I ſhall be excuſed citing any private perſonages, though I am confident many equal them. As a proof of our diſpoſition and natural capacities for the moſt ornamental learning, I ſhall refer to Mrs. Carter, who has done ſuch ſtrict juſtice to Epictetus, and diſplayed ſuch a fund of real literature in her late tranſla-

tion, that the modern male critics have owned her equal to any genii of their gender.

When we conſider the Sex with reſpect to medicine, it would ſeem they were born to exerciſe the art, and aſſiſt the ſick. Their great cleanlineſs, their attention to every minute complaint, their readineſs to redreſs it, their kind behaviour, their ſympathetic fondneſs, are ſo many reſtoratives to the patient. Their abilities are not confined to adminiſtering the remedies; they are equally fit for diſcovering them. The world is indebted to our Sex for a number of medicinal inventions, and our countrywomen in particular, (ſome of whom have received pecuniary grants from parliament for their diſcoveries) are remarkable for their great hoſpitality and charity to the ſick of all kinds.

Let us now view the Ladies in a married ſtate, in which they enter for life, the many viciſſitudes whereof force them to exert the greateſt philoſophy, and the moſt conſummate prudence. Little experience will evince, that the women are more ſuited for this holy union than the men. Girls are capable of regulating a houſe, and all the domeſtic concerns of a family, at the age when men are not able to regulate themſelves, and ſhould remain under the government of their tutors, inſtead of launching out as maſters of themſelves and families.

What pains do the women take to live peaceably with their huſbands! They ſubmit themſelves to their controul; they do nothing without the conſent of their lords and maſters; they force their inclinations in almoſt every thing, to avoid diſpleaſing; and they frequently deprive themſelves of the moſt reaſonable diverſions, to prevent giving their huſbands any ſuſpicion. The inconſtancy of the male ſex is notorious, and the fidelity of the women is as remarkable. Cuſtom has authoriſed them both;

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ſo cruel is that tyrant to us upon every occaſion! we nevertheleſs patiently ſupport our misfortunes, even though our huſbands take every poſſible means to aggravate them. How manifeſtly ſuperior are we here in ſenſe, reaſon, and forbearance!

The regulation of domeſtic concerns, is the department of the women, becauſe the mens' pride makes them fancy it beneath them, otherwiſe we ſhould not be indulged in this ſmall ſhare of government. But the great care we take of our children plainly proves how ſuited we are for any vocation, and particularly for this, which is of no ſmall importance, when it is maturely conſidered how much the commonweal depends upon the proper training of children. How frequently is a mother's reſt interrupted by her attention or dread of her child's wants; ſhe, with the greateſt pleaſure, deprives herſelf of neceſſaries, that her child may not want them; if it teſtifies the leaſt ſymptoms of pain, the mother is upon the rack till it is appeaſed; and is ſtill more tortured for not being able to eaſe her child at the price of her own ſuffering.

The virtuous conduct and religious example, which are ever greateſt on the ſide of the wife; fail not to give that moral turn which is always to be found, even in men, till ſuch time as they have abandoned themſelves to libertiniſm and licentiouſneſs.

Were I to enter into a particular detail of all the circumſtances in life, wherein the women manifeſt ſuch ſuperior virtues to the men, it might be thought too great a panegyric (bordering upon partiality) from a female pen. How ſtriking would be their ſobriety and abſtemiouſneſs, with reſpect to drinking and eating! how philoſophically great their patience in adverſity; their courage and reſolution in fatigue and difficulties; their moderation in pleaſure, and the indulgence of their paſſions! how extenſive their charity

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and beneficence! how rigid their probity! how amazing their prudence! in a word, we ſhould appear to participate with the men, in all human virtues, without partaking of many of their innumerable vices and foibles.

THESE are my ſentiments and obſervations upon the intellectual capacities of the two ſexes! but to avoid being dogmatical (which is the great vice of my opponents) I ſhall now conſider, and I hope refute, the moſt material arguments that have been urged to prove a diſparity between us.

WHAT confirms the vulgar in their opinion of the women is, that the learned corroborate it. Thus the ſentiments of the world being biaſſed by an implicit belief of what they are told from thoſe they look upon as their ſuperiors, they give up their right to think for themſelves, and are blindfold led by their noſe, into any depth of error that cuſtom may have prepared.

THE ideas of truth being annexed to ſcience, what is propoſed by thoſe who are learned, never fails being looked upon as true; and as the greateſt number of theſe are only nominally ſo, thoſe who let themſelves be decided by the majority, are on the ſide of error, which is the moſt agreeable to them, by reaſon of their great intimacy with it.

THUS it happens when they meet with poets, orators, hiſtorians, and philoſophers, who publicly aſſert that the women are inferior to the men; leſs noble; leſs perfect; they are eaſily reconciled to this opinion, being ignorant that the pretended knowledge of theſe writers, is juſt the ſame as their own, differing in nothing but its greater extent, and being more ſpecious; adding to the force of cuſtom, the ſentiments of the ancients, upon whoſe authority all their

their certainty is founded: and in this reſpect, the learned and the unlearned, fall into the ſame miſtake, by believing what thoſe they eſteem aſſert, and being prejudiced in their favour, credit whatever they ſay muſt be true; inſtead of deferring their approbation till they are convinced of their veracity.

Poets and orators have no other deſign, than to pleaſe and perſuade; and appearances are ſufficient with moſt men. Exaggerations and hyperbole being eſſentially neceſſary to them, in order to enlarge ideas as occaſion ſuits, they at pleaſure transform great things into ſmall, and ſmall ones into great. Thus they too frequently attribute the vices of ſome particular women to the whole ſex, and the virtues of ſome individual to all the maſculine creation. The ornaments, with which they decorate their diſcourſe, has a marvellous effect in forcing a belief upon the unwary. Their fine words and flowing ſentences dazzle the judgment of the ignorant, and prevent their diſcovering the truth. There are ſeveral pieces wrote againſt the women, which to moſt people carry all the appearance of reaſon, when nothing but the figures of ſpeech, ſuch as metaphors, proverbs, deſcriptions, ſimilies, are of any real force. And becauſe there is generally a good deal of art and genius in theſe compoſitions, it is imagined there is equal truth in them.

There are people ſimple enough to imagine, that the women are more given to choler and paſſion than the men, becauſe poets have repreſented the Furies under the figures of women; they ſhould conſider this as only a poetic flight upon Pegaſus, and that the ſame hand that draws the Harpies with female viſages, paints the Devil in the ſhape of a man.

I HAVE heard ſome doughty diſputants endeavour to prove that the women are inconſtant, becauſe a certain famous Latin poet has ſaid, they are ſubject to continual changes; and a French writer has compared them to a weather-cock. Such dull rogues may well miſtake the meaning of an author, and fancy the point of wit to be the point of diſpute.

COMMON eloquence may be called ſpeaking optics; there is no point of light in which it may not place a figure; there is no colour, no appearance that it cannot give it; there is no virtue that may not appear a vice in this ſpeculum.

WHAT hiſtorians aſſert with reſpect to the women, makes ſtill greater impreſſion than the harangues of orators; as they appear to advance nothing upon their own authority, their evidence is leſs ſuſpected; beſides, it agrees with people's prior opinion, and they are ſatisfied in finding women were formerly in the ſame ſituation they are now. But all the influence hiſtorians have upon the minds of men, is nothing but the effect of prejudice, ſo common with reſpect to antiquity, which is repreſented under the figure of an old man, who being endowed with great wiſdom and experience, is not liable to be impoſed upon, or aſſert ought that deviates from truth.

NEVERTHELESS, the ancients were equally liable to error as the moderns; and there is no more reaſon for aſſenting to their opinion now, than there was at the time of their exiſtence. Women were looked upon formerly as they are at preſent, and with juſt the ſame reaſon; therefore every thing the men have ſaid upon this ſubject, ſhould reaſonably be ſuſpected, becauſe they are judges in their own cauſe, and would never decide againſt themſelves. For this reaſon, when the ſentiments of fifty authors are cited againſt the

the women, they are to be conſidered as the tradition of prejudice and error. There are as little faith and rectitude in ancient hiſtory as in common relations, wherein, it is too well known, there are hardly any. Authors never fail to interſperſe in their writings what is dictated by their paſſions or their intereſt; and the moſt part of them having but very confuſed notions of virtue and vice, frequently take one for the other: thoſe who read their productions, with the uſual prepoſſeſſion in favour of thoſe they eſteem, fail not to embrace the ſame miſtake. Prejudiced in their own favour, the virtues and advantages of their ſex are every where exaggerated; the merit of the women is depreciated and debaſed through an oppoſite intereſt.

When one is appriſed of this inequitable proceeding of the men, and takes the trouble of examining into paſt times, it appears ſurpriſing that the women have not been behind hand with the men in any thing, and that the virtue they have demonſtrated upon every occaſion, is far beyond ought the men can cite in their favour. They have teſtified in every ſituation as great intellectual talents and abilities as the men: ſome have governed ſtates and empires with the moſt exemplary wiſdom and moderation; others have adminiſtered juſtice with ſuch integrity as could be equalled by nothing but the Areopagites. Many have, by their prudence and good counſel, re-eſtabliſhed the tranquillity of kingdoms, and replaced their huſbands upon their thrones. Have they not commanded armies? have they not defended ramparts with more than heroic courage? ſuch as we might expect to find in an Alexander, a Cocles, or a King of Pruſſia! how many have there been whoſe chaſtity was proof againſt every attack; neither the moſt tremendous threats could ſtagger, or the moſt alluring promiſes ſeduce them; and if the bigotry and ſuperſtition of thoſe days ſtill prevailed, the torments they ſuffered for religion would have

have no ſmall weight in the balance. Have we not ſeen as much learning in the women, as aught the men could ever boaſt? All the ſciences have been inveſtigated to their greateſt depths by females. Have they not penetrated into the moſt latent parts of nature, or aſcended to the very pinnacle of metaphyſical reflection? Languages, politics, morality, even mathematics, have all been exhibited in the Sex. How then does hiſtory corroborate the imbecillity of the women?

The authority of the lawyers has a great weight with many people in reſpect to the women, as their profeſſion was inſtituted to adjudge to every one his due. They put the women under the dominion of their huſbands, as children under that of their father, in ſaying, that nature allotted them the minor functions in the community of the world, eſtranging them from public authority. This opinion is frequently quoted upon their foundation, and looked upon as irrefutable. But, with all due ſubmiſſion to the gentlemen of the robe, they would be a good deal embarraſſed, if they were obliged to give an intelligible explanation of what they call nature upon this occaſion, and how ſhe has diſtinguiſhed the Sex as they pretend.

It muſt be conſidered, that thoſe who formed or compiled the laws, being men, favoured their own ſex, as the women would, perhaps, have done with regard to theirs, had they ſupplied their place; and laws having been made ſince the formation of ſocieties, in the ſame maner as they are at preſent, with reſpect to the women, lawyers, who were not without their prejudices, have attributed to nature a diſtinction that is only due to cuſtom. The principle of dependence and ſervitude, is abſolutely repugnant to nature, which puts all mankind upon an equality.

It will not be difficult to perſuade ourſelves to diſſent from the opinion of the learned, as it is eaſily diſcovered, that their profeſſion does not induce them to inſtruct themſelves with preciſion of the reality of things. Appearance and probability, are ſufficient for poets and orators. The evidence of antiquity is all that hiſtorians buſy themſelves about; and the opinion of lawyers is founded in cuſtom. But with reſpect to the ſentiments of philoſophers, it will be more difficult to invalidate them, as it would ſeem that theſe deep reaſoners are above all thoſe conſiderations that influence the former, as indeed they ought to be, who pique themſelves upon ſearching after truth wherever ſhe is to be found. This maxim, in which they pretend to center all their reſearches, ſecures them a general credit for all their propoſitions, particularly when they do not claſh with the generally received opinion.

Thus their aſſent to the common error of the inferiority of the women, gives it its greateſt weight. But when it is conſidered, that moſt philoſophers reaſon from the ſame principle as the herd of mankind, and not from any ſuperior knowledge; that they brought their prejudice from the ſchools, where it is ſo early inculcated; that they would be guilty of the greateſt of crimes amongſt their ſect, to doubt an opinion that had been pre-eſtabliſhed; that the diſparity of the ſexes was never ſo much as thought of as a ſubject of argumentation, being before ſo thoroughly believed; it is a moot point, whether philoſophers are a whit more diſintereſted in this reſpect, than any others of their ſex.

They are too buſy in diſcovering new worlds—infinite ſpace-vacuums—the materiality and infinite diviſibility of the rays of the ſun—to caſt a thought towards ſuch trifling animal beings as women!

Though they thus fruitleſſly employ themſelves, it may be imagined their principles ſuffice to diſcover which of the two ſexes has naturally the advantage over the other; but this can be ſuggeſted by none, but thoſe who are either ignorant of the hypotheſes, or prejudiced in their favour. The knowledge of ourſelves is abſolutely neceſſary for the proper diſcuſſion of this queſtion; and particularly that of our body, which is the organ of knowledge. In this reſpect philoſophers are very ſuperficial, as they are in regard to truth and ſcience; that is to ſay, the method of acquiring ſuch real lights, without which it is impoſſible to diſcuſs the preſent queſtion: but not to loſe time in relating any opinions of theſe men, I ſhall give in general, what I think upon the ſubject.

All men being made like one another, they have the ſame general ideas upon natural things; for example, of light, heat, and duration; and all the knowledge we endeavour to arrive at, is reduced to a particular acquaintance with the interior and exterior diſpoſition of every object, in order to our framing a juſt opinion of them. All that maſters can do in order to teach us this, is to make us properly apply our faculties to whatever preſents itſelf, that we may examine the appearances and effects, without precipitation or prejudice; and to point out to us the order in which it is neceſſary to range our thoughts, to properly recur to them when we have occaſion.

For example, if a perſon who had no learning were to aſk me, in what conſiſted the fluidity of water? I ſhould aſſert nothing upon the occaſion, but aſk him what obſervations he had made upon that head? Whether he thought the water, not being confined in a veſſel, would not expand itſelf? that is to ſay, whether all its parts would not, in that caſe, ſeparate and diſunite

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of themſelves, without any foreign body introduced? I would bid him put his finger in, and he would find no reſiſtance; and tell him, if he threw in ſugar or ſalt, their bodies would diminiſh and incorporate with the liquor. So far I ſhould ſay nothing new: and if, in the ſame manner, I could convey an idea to him of reſt and motion, he would then find, that the nature of liquor conſiſting in its inviſible parts being in perpetual motion, it muſt neceſſarily be confined in ſome veſſel, and gives way to any hard bodies; that the particles of water being ſmall, ſmooth, and pointed, they introduce themſelves into the pores of the ſugar, ſhaking and dividing the parts by their junction.

This idea of fluidity, which is a detached part of phyſics, would appear with much greater perſpicuity under its proper head in natural philoſophy: as it is, there is nothing ſo complex in it, but the common run of women may eaſily comprehend it; nor is there any thing more difficult in the other parts of ſcience, when they are properly illuſtrated; and it will appear that every ſcience upon which we reaſon, requires leſs intellectual capacity to comprehend, as well as time to acquire, than to learn Dreſden work, or many of the moſt common vocations the women are employed in.

In fact, the ideas of natural objects are formed in the ſame manner by every one. Adam conceived them juſt the ſame way as we; children like aged perſons, and women like men; and theſe ideas are renewed, ſtrengthened, and ſupported by the continual application of the ſenſes. The mind is ever buſy, and they who can diſcover its operations in one reſpect, may eaſily find them out in all the reſt. There is no other difference in the heat of the ſun, and that of a ſingle ſpark from the fire, but the proportion of great to ſmall. To think properly upon theſe ſubjects, there is no occaſion for either addreſs or the exerciſe of the body.

It is not ſo with reſpect to the works I have been ſpeaking of; here the application muſt be greater; the ideas being, as one may ſay, arbitrary, it is more difficult to conceive and retain them. Hence ariſes the neceſſity of a long apprenticeſhip to learn any trade, as it depends upon exerciſe. Now, in making tapeſtry, the common occupation of the ladies, ſkill is required to obſerve the neceſſary proportions upon the canvaſs, to diſtribute with preciſion the ſilk or worſted; to mix with propriety the colours; not too much to confine or too much extend the points; not to put more in one row than in another; to make the ſhades imperceptibly diminiſh. In a word, one muſt know how to variegate the work in a thouſand different manners to arrive at any perfection; whereas in the ſciences, there is nothing to do but obſerve with order, works already complete, and ever uniform; and the difficulty in ſucceeding in this, depends leſs upon the objects and the diſpoſition of the body, than in finding a maſter whoſe capacity is ſuited to the inſtruction.

It is, therefore, not ſurpriſing, to find both men and women, without learning, converſe upon points relative to the ſciences; ſince the method of acquiring them, is nothing more than to correct thoſe two infirmities of good ſenſe, which are imbibed through precipitate judgment, and confirmed by the error of cuſtom.

The outlines which I have juſt drawn of knowledge in general, might ſuffice to diſſuade the prejudiced from the opinion of a diſparity in the Sexes, with reſpect to their abilities of acquiring real learning. But as this ſentiment is of ſo ancient a date, to lop the branches is not ſufficient; I muſt lay the axe to the root, and regain, inch by inch, the real poſſeſſions of the Sex, though ſo long uſurped under ſpecious pretences. It is therefore neceſſary

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to urge my reaſons ſtill farther by ſtated principles, that I may neither confuſe, or be confuſed.

My firſt propoſition is, that women, conſidered according to the principles of ſound philoſophy, are as capable as the men of all kinds of knowledge, as good ſenſe is of no gender.

It is eaſily obſerved, that all the difference between the ſexes conſiſts only in the frame of their bodies, with reſpect to thoſe parts which are formed for the production of their ſpecies. The ſoul is united in the body of women in the ſame manner as in men; and the mental capacity which thence ariſes, is excited in women by the ſame paſſions, deſires, and diſpoſitions, as in men. The head, which is univerſally allowed the ſeat of reaſon, is, according to the moſt critical anatomy, formed exactly the ſame, and compoſed of all the like parts in both ſexes. The women have the ſame organs of ſenſe as the men, in every reſpect; they hear by their ears, ſee by their eyes, and taſte by their tongues; and, as far as deſcription and compariſon can be allowed to decide, when there is no other arbiter, they have all their ſenſes in as great, if not greater, perfection than the men. Thus are they both ſtruck in the ſame manner by external objects; and having the ſame faculties of memory and reflection as the men, wherefore can we imagine they have not the power of reaſoning and judging with equal preciſion? If this be allowed, we have arrived at equal knowledge in metaphyſics with them.

Having eyes and hands, may they not perform, or ſee performed, the anatomy of the human body, in conſidering the ſymmetry and ſtructure of the parts, with their difference and analogy; their figure, motion, and functions; the change they are liable to, and from thence conclude the means to preſerve them

in a proper ſtate, and of reſtoring them to it, when they undergo any alteration.

THERE is nothing more neceſſary for acquiring this, than having an acquaintance with external bodies which affect their own, in diſcovering their properties, and the cauſe of their good or bad impreſſions: this is known by the uſe of one's ſenſes and experiments; and the women, being equally capable of both, may make as great a proficiency in phyſics and medicine as men.

Is there occaſion for ſuch vaſt penetration to know, that reſpiration is abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve life; and that this is performed by means of the air which enters at the noſtrils and the mouth, and conveys itſelf to the lungs, to refreſh the blood which there paſſes in circulating over the whole body, and produces alterations in proportion to its denſity or rarefaction, which are occaſioned by vapours and exhalations?

As to aſtronomy, what is there the women may not equally diſcover with the men? All the planetary phænomena are viſible to them by the uſe of optics; and a proper attention to their periodical revolutions will inform them of their motion and their courſe. Perhaps their general ignorance of mathematics may be urged as a reaſon for their concluſions being vague, and their problems incorrect: but this does not prove their inability of acquiring a knowledge therein, ſince all their faculties are clearly evinced to be as perfect as thoſe of the men.

WE have already pointed out thoſe diſpoſitions in the women which are proper for the culture of thoſe ſciences neceſſary for their own inſtruction; and if we go a little further, we may diſcover

cover in them a power of acquiring thoſe which are eſſential for their general union in ſociety.

It is an error in vulgar philoſophy to make ſuch a great diſtinction between the ſciences, that (according to this opinion) one can ſcarce diſcover any affinity between them. The extent of human wiſdom is greatly limited, in ſuppoſing that no one man is capable of acquiring a proficiency in ſeveral ſciences; that being diſpoſed for phyſics and medicine, one can have no genius for eloquence or theology.

This notion is, on the one hand, occaſioned by the uſual way of confounding nature with cuſtom; in taking the diſpoſition of particular people for one ſcience more than another for the effect of their conſtitution; whereas it is generally only a caſual inclination occaſioned by neceſſity, education, or uſe; and on the other hand, for want of having obſerved, that there is, properly ſpeaking, but one ſcience in the world, which is that of knowing ourſelves, and that all the reſt are only particular applications.

The difficulty which, in fact, there is at preſent, in learning languages, morality, &c. conſiſts in being ignorant how to acquire the firſt general ſcience: hence indeed, thoſe who believed the women capable of knowing phyſics and medicine, might ſtill doubt their abilities in this reſpect; but then the difficulty would be mutual on both ſides. To arrive at this, it is neceſſary to think properly. This is done by ſeriouſly fixing one's mind upon thoſe objects which offer themſelves, in order to form clear and diſtinct ideas of them; to examine them on all ſides, with all their different relations, and from thence conclude no judgments but what appear manifeſtly true. Having made theſe juſt concluſions, there is nothing more neceſſary for compleating the ſcience, than to

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range one's thoughts in a natural order. In this there is not any thing above the capacity of the women; thoſe who could inſtruct themſelves in this manner in phyſic and medicine, will find no great difficulty in advancing themſelves in all the reſt.

It is impoſſible that women ſhould practiſe virtue to ſo great a height, without being able to diſcover its fundamental maxims. A woman already verſed in what has been related, will eaſily diſcover the rules of her conduct. That there are three ſorts of duties, which comprehend all morality; the firſt relates to the Almighty; the next to ourſelves; and the laſt to our neighbours. The clear and diſtinct ideas ſhe had formed of her mind, and of its junction with her body, will infallibly induce her to believe there is another ſpirit-infinite author of all nature. Hence the fundamentals of religion will plainly appear. After having learnt by phyſics in what the pleaſure of the ſenſes conſiſts, and in what manner external objects contribute to the perfection of the mind, and to the preſervation of the body, ſhe cannot fail concluding that to uſe them without moderation, is being one's own enemy. If afterwards ſhe is immerſed in the general combuſtion of civil ſociety, being ſubject to the ſame paſſions and wants as her fellow creatures, the axiom of Do unto others as you would they ſhould do unto you, will naturally occur to her; and alſo, that in order to effect this, one muſt curb that luſt of gain which is the cauſe of ſo many troubles and misfortunes in life.

The laſt of theſe duties will manifeſt itſelf ſtill ſtronger, if ſhe would endeavour to fathom the depths of polity and juriſprudence. As they each of them relate to the duties of men one to another, it will appear, that in order to judge of their obligations in civil ſociety, it will be neceſſary to recur to the firſt intent of their inſtitution. She will view them, abſtracted from ſociety, quite free

free and equal, without any other inclination but that of their own preſervation, and with an equal right over every thing eſſential thereto. She will then find, that this equality engaging them in a war, or fomenting a continual diſtruſt, which is oppoſite to their intent, human reaſon dictates to them, that they cannot live in peace without each giving up his right, and without entering into conventions and contracts; in order to render theſe obligations valid, and terminate their uneaſineſs, it is neceſſary to refer to an umpire, who taking upon himſelf his delegated authority, forces every one to keep his promiſe; that being choſe for the mutual benefit of his ſubjects, he can have no other deſign, and that in order to be of real ſervice to them, it is neceſſary to make him maſter of their perſons and effects, of peace and war.

In thus fathoming the origin of civil polity, ſhe muſt neceſſarily diſcover what is natural equity; what are contract, authority, and obedience; what is the nature of law: in a word, by proper reflections and books, ſhe may become both a lawyer and a politician.

After having acquired a perfect knowledge of herſelf, and being thoroughly inſtructed in the general rules for the conduct of men, ſhe may chuſe to acquaint herſelf with the manner of living in foreign countries. Having obſerved, that the changes of time, ſeaſon, place, age, food, company, or exerciſe, had occaſioned alterations, and inſtigated different paſſions, it will not be difficult to conceive that thoſe variations produce the like effects with reſpect to a whole people; that they have different inclinations, cuſtoms, manners, and laws, according to their vicinity, or diſtance from the ſea—the ſouth and northern poles; according to the face of the country, with reſpect to plains or mountains, rivers or woods; with reſpect to the fertility of the earth, and its diſpoſition for producing particular plants; and in regard to the commerce and

intercourſe they have with their neighbours, or diſtant inhabitants of the earth: theſe things ſhe may ſtudy and ſoon learn; and what are the manners, religion, government, and intereſts of twenty or thirty different nations, but as thoſe of ſo many private families. And in reſpect to the ſituation of kingdoms and the adjacent lands, ſeas or iſlands, and the diviſion of the continent, they are as eaſily learnt upon a map as the different quarters of the town, with their ſtreets and avenues.

The knowledge of the preſent might induce her alſo to be acquainted with the paſt, and whatever ſhe might retain of geography, would be of great uſe to her in hiſtory, as ſhe would thereby have a clearer notion of a battle, a voyage, or a negociation; and if ſhe were capable of gaining a thorough inſight into hiſtory, ſhe might alſo acquaint herſelf with the laws and ſtatutes of her own country; for it certainly is more complex and difficult to have a knowledge of the nature and conſtitution of all ſocieties, than that of any particular one.

Thus have I given ſome of the higheſt points of knowledge which the men can pretend to aim at, by which many of them have ſignalized themſelves, as well by their fame, as the wealth they have amaſſed in their employments—acquiſitions which they have ſo long monopolized to our great prejudice, and their immortal vanity; when it is clearly proved they have no more pretenſions than ourſelves, except thoſe that are founded in cuſtom, prejudice, and injuſtice. It has been judged convenient, that preſcription ſhould take place for the peace and ſecurity of families; that is to ſay, a perſon who has enjoyed anothers eſtate without annoyance, for ſuch a ſpace of time, ſhould remain in poſſeſſion of it, without the real proprietor being able to recover any thing by the juſtneſs of his pretenſions. But no general determination has ever been given,

given, that thoſe who might by negligence, or otherwiſe, become diſpoſſeſſed of their effects, were rendered incapable of recovering them; their inability is only founded in the civil law of their particular community. The men have not only excluded the women from partaking of the ſciences and employments, by long preſcription, but alſo pretend that this excluſion is founded in their natural inability: there is, however, nothing more chimerical; for whether we conſider the ſciences in themſelves, or the organs whereby a knowledge of them is acquired, we ſhall find both ſexes equally diſpoſed. As there is but one way of conveying food to the ſtomach, ſo there is but one method of ſupplying the mind with truth, its proper nutriment. And if we conſider the difference in thoſe organs by which knowledge is acquired, it muſt be owned, to ſpeak with ſincerity, that the women, in this reſpect, have the advantage. There is no denying that thoſe among men, who are groſſeſt and heavieſt, are certainly the moſt ſtupid; and on the contrary, that the moſt delicate, are the moſt lively and vivacious: experience is ſo clear and peremptory upon this head, that is would be needleſs to ſupport it with reaſons. This conſequence then naturally follows that women being of a more delicate frame than men, they muſt inevitably equal them, if not exceed them, when they apply themſelves to ſtudy.

In fact, all mankind, of both ſexes have a like claim to truth, as the mind is in all equally capable to diſcover it, and as we are all ſtruck in the ſame manner by thoſe objects that impreſs our ſenſes. This right which is inherent to us, to obtain the ſame knowledge is founded in the ſtricteſt juſtice, as there is not one who has not as much occaſion for it as another. There is no one who does not endeavour to be happy, and to this center all our actions tend. Real happineſs muſt be founded in clear and diſtinct knowledge, and we have the greateſt authority to believe, in this our future

felicity

felicity will conſiſt. A miſer is happy in amaſſing great wealth; an ambitious man, when he is above his equals: in a word, all the happineſs of man, real or imaginary, conſiſts in knowledge, that is to ſay in the idea of poſſeſſing what they ſeek after.

This induces one to believe there are no ideas of truth, but thoſe procured by ſtudy, which are ſtable and independant of the poſſeſſion or the want of thoſe things which create the felicity of this life. A miſer cannot be happy in the mere knowledge of his having riches, without he has the deſire or intent of immediate poſſeſſion; and this naturally leads to the reflection of his being no longer their proprietor, which muſt create his affliction. But it is far different with reſpect to the knowledge of one's ſelf and its dependencies, but more particularly that which is neceſſary for the commerce of the world. As both ſexes are then ſuſceptible of the ſame happineſs, they have an equal right to every thing that tends to its acquiſition

My next propoſition is, that women are not leſs capable than men of filling the employments in ſociety.

As I think it has been clearly proved, that the female ſex have an equal propenſity to acquire learning as the men, let us now inquire, why they ſhould not ſhare in the government or defence of the ſtate? Cuſtom and preſcription are ſtill their greateſt adverſaries; but we have ſeen women upon a throne, who ſtudied the diſpoſition of their people, their intereſts, laws and cuſtoms; who guarded their liberties, and protected their properties, equal to any of their male predeceſſors. And if we have not only reaſon, but example, to convince us of their abilities for regal government, ſurely they cannot be ſuppoſed deficient in talents for executing the orders of their Prince; and they certainly would appear

appear with equal dignity, as miniſters ſecretaries, vice-queens, governeſſes, or ſenators. And what more ſurpriſing would it be to ſee a woman with a caſque upon her head than a crown? Preſide in a council of war, than in a council of ſtate? Would there be aught aſtoniſhing to ſee her exerciſe her ſoldiers, range an army in form of battle, or diſtribute them in different corps? There is nothing more difficult to acquire in the art military than in the other arts, (which the women are moſt certainly able to compaſs;) the moſt eſſential difference conſiſts in its barbarous intent, and the thunder of the cannon. A topographical map clearly points out the routs of any particular country, the good and bad paſſes, thoſe which are the moſt dangerous, and moſt proper for ſurpriſes. There are few ſoldiers who are ignorant that they muſt poſſeſs the defiles before they engage with their troops; regulate all their plans according to the advices of ſcouts they can depend upon, and even deceive their own army by marches and counter-marches, in order the better to conceal their real deſign. For this, who ſo fit as a woman, ſo fruitful in invention, and ſo prolific in ſtratagems? Might we not, when a female commanded, expect to ſee ſuch artifices practiſed, as are reckoned the effect of the moſt conſummate generalſhip? the enemy ſurpriſed, obliged to face the wind, the duſt, and the ſun; by unexpected feints, drawn off from the real attack; miſguided by falſe alarms; drawn into ambuſcades by feigned flights; nor need we fear their want of courage or reſolution: in this example and practice are, perhaps, every thing. The ſoldier who, upon the parade, falls at the ſhock of the firſt diſcharge of his own muſket, is the firſt to mount the breach in the day of aſſault; and the women, ſo reſolute in the defence of whatever regards their honour, would not fail teſtifying the greateſt ardour and reſolution upon ſuch an occaſion.

As there is no employment in ſociety, which is not contained in thoſe that we have mentioned, nor any ſituation in which more ſenſe or knowledge is required, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the women are ſuited for all kinds of vocations whatever. With what reaſon then, may we exhort the ladies to apply themſelves to their ſtudies, without attending to thoſe futile arguments, which may be urged againſt ſuch attachment? For as they have the ſame powers as the men for diſcovering truth, which is the only thing worthy their occupation, they ſhould deſtroy all foundation for reproaching them with preferring indolence and trifling amuſements, to the purſuit of valuable acquiſitions. Beſide, the intereſt they would have for being ſuited for any vocation, the ſatisfaction they would receive from being acquainted with every topic that occured in converſation, would more than requite them for their pains. Add to this the advantage they would have over the men, whenever they ſtrove to convince or pleaſe; the force of judgment, eloquence, and beauty, would always ſecure them the laurel; and thoſe who had no tranſcendent charms, would far more than ſupply their want by literary acquiſitions: what pretence would huſbands then have to eſtrange them from all but their domeſtic concerns? And if cuſtom and prejudice have ſo irrevocably exiled them from all employments of the ſtate, they would, at leaſt, have the ſatisfaction of judging, with what propriety they were executed.

My next propoſition is, That women have naturally an advantageous diſpoſition for acquiring the ſciences, and that they are equally intitled with the men, to the ideas of perfection, nobleneſs, and decency.

Hitherto we have only taken notice of the head in women, and it appears that part, conſidered in general, has in them as much proportion

proportion as in the men, and is therefore equally fit for the reception of knowledge, whereof it is the organ. But as this organ is not the ſame in all, (the men not excluded) it being in ſome more ſuited for certain things than in others, we muſt deſcend more to particulars, and inquire if there is nothing in women which diſqualifies them for the ſciences.

It may be obſerved, that they have generally a happier and longer phyſiognomy than the men; they have a forehead high and large, which is the moſt certain mark of a vivacious and ſprightly imagination; and this is verified by experience, as well as their great memory. The power of retention muſt depend upon a brain diſpoſed in ſuch a manner, as eaſily to receive the impreſſion of objects, however ſlight or tranſitory, to preſerve them perfect without difficulty, and to preſent them to the mind inſtantaneouſly, when occaſion requires.

Heat being the natural concomitant of this diſpoſition, it prepares the mind for a lively impreſſion of objects; it attaches it thereto, and makes it penetrate into all the labyrinth of reflection upon the ſubject, and by that means examine it in whatever point of light it pleaſes. Hence it is, that thoſe who are endowed with a great imagination, conſider things on more ſides, and in leſs time, than others; and being more ingenious and inventive, diſcover with the ſingle caſt of an eye, more than thoſe deficient in this reſpect can, after the greateſt inſpection. They have alſo the abilities of repreſenting things in an agreeable and inſinuating manner, in immediately diſcovering the diſpoſition of their company; they give a ſuitable bias to their diſcourſe, expreſſing themſelves with grace and eaſe, and placing their thoughts in the moſt ſtriking point of light.

All this is remarkable in the women; and I cannot diſcover any thing in it contrary to good ſenſe: diſcernment and propriety are its natural characteriſtics. To acquire theſe qualities, a ſedate reflection upon the objects is requiſite, in order to avoid error and contempt by inconſiderate flights. It is true, that a multitude of thoughts in perſons of a vivacious turn, frequently run away with the imagination; but it is nevertheleſs true, that, by the proper exerciſe of reaſon, this is to be corrected. As a farther proof of the compatibility of vivacity and good ſenſe, the greateſt men of the laſt and preſent age, have all been perſons of ſtrong imagination.

Indeed, this temperament ſeems to be the beſt ſuited for ſociety; for mankind being intended for mutual intercourſe, thoſe are to be eſteemed who have the moſt agreeable and uſeful way of communicating their thoughts; and women, who have naturally good intellects, a great imagination, and a ſtrong memory, with a ſhining method of delivering their ſentiments, may eaſily acquire this ſo much envied character.

This may ſuffice to ſhew, that with reſpect to the head, the two ſexes are equal. Many curious diſquiſitions might be made upon the other parts of the body, but theſe muſt be, in ſome meaſure, veiled. The men have always been ſo unhappy as to mingle their paſſions, in all the works of nature; there are few ideas to which they have not added ſentiments of love or hatred, of eſteem or diſlike; and thoſe which relate to the diſtinction of the ſexes, are ſo connected with materiality, and ſo jumbled with notions of imperfection, meanneſs, and other ſuch trifles, that there is no treating of it, in this reſpect, in an elegant and polite manner.

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, it is upon this confuſed mixture of extravagant ideas, that the diſadvantageous notions of the women are founded, and by which low minds endeavour to mortify them. The beſt medium between paſſing over unnoticed what may be thought irrefutable, and expreſſing one's ſelf in an unbecoming manner, is to ſettle what may be reaſonably called perfection and imperfection, nobleneſs and meanneſs, propriety and impropriety.

As I believe there is a God, I eaſily conceive that on him every thing depends; and if after having conſidered the natural and internal ſtate of creatures (which, if bodies, conſiſt in the diſpoſition of their parts, with reſpect to each other, and their external contexture, in regard to acting upon, or being acted upon by objects ſurrounding them), I endeavour to diſcover the reaſon of theſe two ſtates, I can find no other than the will of the author. I afterwards obſerve that theſe bodies have uſually a certain diſpoſition, which renders them capable of producing and receiving certain effects; for inſtance, that man hears by his ears the thoughts of thoſe like himſelf, and makes them underſtand his own by the organs of voice. And I remark, that theſe bodies are incapable of theſe effects, when they are otherwiſe diſpoſed. Hence two ideas ariſe; the firſt repreſents the original ſtate of things, with all the neceſſary conſequences, which I call perfection; the other repreſents to me the oppoſite ſtate, which I call imperfection.

A man is therefore perfect, in my opinion, when he has every thing that is neceſſary, according to the divine inſtitution, to produce and receive the effects for which he is deſtined; and he is imperfect, when he has more or leſs parts than are neceſſary, or ſome indiſpoſition which impedes the intent of his creation. Therefore being formed in ſuch a manner as to require aliment for his ſupport, this neceſſity cannot be looked upon as an imper-

fection, any more than its conſequence. All creatures muſt be perfect when they are in their natural and uſual ſtate.

Perfection muſt not be confounded with nobleneſs; they are two very diſtinct things: two things may be equal in perfection, but unequal in nobleneſs.

When I conſider myſelf, it appears that my mind alone being capable of knowledge, ſhould be preferred to the body, and conſidered as the moſt noble; but when I look upon bodies, abſtracted from myſelf, that is to ſay, without inquiring whether they may be uſeful or hurtful, agreeable or diſagreeable, I cannot perſuade myſelf that one is more noble than another, being all matter, diverſified only by their figures. But if I intereſt myſelf in this reſpect in conſidering their advantage or detriment, the conſequence will be different. Though my head, abſtracted from the benefit which ariſes to me from it, is of no more concern to me than the other parts of my body; yet, when I conſider its importance, with reſpect to the union of my mind and body, it claims greatly the preference to any other part. For the ſame reaſon, though all the parts of the body are equally perfect, one has a greater regard for ſome than others; even thoſe which are the moſt uſeful, are frequently conſidered as the moſt contemptible, becauſe that uſe may be leſs agreeable to us than that of the other parts. It is the ſame with reſpect to every thing that ſurrounds us and affects us. The reaſon that the ſame object pleaſes and diſpleaſes different people, is that it ſtrikes them in a different manner.

The tie of ſociety has produced the idea of propriety or decency among men. Thus, though there is no imperfection or meanneſs, in alleviating the body, it is a neceſſary and indiſpenſable

conſequence

conſequence of our natural diſpoſition, and all ways of doing it are, in fact, equal: there are ſome which are conſidered as leſs decent than others, and they ſhock thoſe perſons in whoſe preſence they are practiſed.

As all creatures and all their actions, conſidered in themſelves, abſtracted from cuſtom, or the uſual eſteem they are held in, are equally noble, and equally perfect, the one as the other; and being in this reſpect alſo as decent, it may be therefore concluded, that the notions of propriety and impropriety, of decency and indecency, are only the effect of man's imagination and caprice. This appears by a thing being decent in one country, and not ſo in another; and even in the ſame kingdom, in different times, or at the ſame time; but among perſons of different rank and inclination, the ſame action is decent and indecent. Propriety, it is plain then, is nothing more than the mode or manner in which things are uſed, but which prudence dictates to us to regulate ourſelves by.

In ſome provinces of India, the labourers are upon the ſame footing as the nobles are amongſt us. In ſome countries, the ſoldier is preferred to the lawyer; in others, it is juſt the reverſe.

In comparing theſe notions with the opinion conceived by the vulgar of the women, the error will be eaſily diſcovered.

The preceding propoſition naturally points out to us to inquire, "From whence ariſes the diſtinction of the ſexes, and how "far it extends; what difference there is between them, with re- "ſpect to vice and virtue; and whether their general tempera- "ment is good or bad?"

THE Almighty having reſolved to produce man dependently of each other, by the help of two perſons, he formed two different bodies for that purpoſe; each was perfect in its way: and it was neceſſary they ſhould be diſpoſed as we ſee them; and every thing that depends upon their reſpective conſtitutions, is to be conſidered as part of their perfection. It is, therefore, without foundation, that ſome imagine the women are not ſo perfect as the men, and repreſent that as a defect, which is an eſſential appendage to the ſex, without which they could not anſwer the intent of their creation. The two ſexes are neceſſary for producing together their likeneſs; and what reaſon can be given for aſſerting the men are more noble than the women, in what relates to children?

To the females we are all indebted for our conception, for our formation, for our being, for our birth, and for our education. To compaſs this they undergo great pain and anxiety: but ſhould this prejudice the men againſt them, and render them deſpicable in their eyes, or recommend them to their greater eſteem and merit? Will any one ſay, that fathers and mothers who employ themſelves in bringing up their children, real good princes who are attentive to the welfare and proſperity of their ſubjects, or magiſtrates who adminiſter juſtice with an impartial hand, are leſs meritorious than thoſe who aſſiſt them in the executive part of their duty.

SOME phyſicians have exhauſted their whole ſtock of logic and argumentation, to prove the temperaments of the ſexes greatly different, and that of women much inferior to the other; but the ſmall ſhare that reaſon has had in theſe ſtupendous pieces, plainly evinces the futility of their conjectures, founded in prejudice and appearances. Female vocations are conſidered as the teſt of their conſtitutions, and their unfitneſs for others, is proved by their inapplication to them.

SUCH

Such reaſoning ſcarce requires a ſerious anſwer; yet it were neceſſary to make ſome obſervations upon it. Men and women are ſimilar in almoſt every thing that relates to the internal and external parts of the body, and the natural functions whereby it is preſerved, are performed in the ſame manner by both. The ſmall difference in their internal formation, is no proof that women are leſs vigorous or ſtrong than the men. Nothing can decide this but experience: there are ſtrong and weak of both ſexes: and the men, trained up in idleneſs and luxury, are weaker than women, and can undergo no hardſhips at firſt; but after being accuſtomed to them for ſome time, they become equal, if not ſuperior to the others.

It is the ſame with reſpect to women; thoſe who are brought up to labour, or take great exerciſe, are more robuſt than the delicate ladies who handle nothing but their needle. Hence i may be concluded, that if both ſexes equally laboured, and took the ſame exerciſe, they would, perhaps, be equally vigorou This was formerly the caſe in a republic, where wreſtling ar other gymnaſtics were practiſed by both ſexes.

For this reaſon, no weight ſhould be given to certain commo expreſſions, which draw their etymology from the preſent unnatural ſtate of the ſexes. When a man is to be ridiculed for puſillanimity, he is called effeminate, meaning he is as cowardly and weak as a woman. When, on the other hand, a woman is be praiſed for her uncommon courage, for her ſtrength, or intellectual capacity, ſhe is compared to a man. Theſe expreſſi ſo favourable to the men, fail not to contribute, in a great mea ſure, to the high opinion that is entertained of them.

However, ſtrength of body can no wiſe decide the point in favour of the men, for in that caſe, beaſts might claim a ſuperiority over them; and among ourſelves, wreſtlers, gladiators, and even chairmen and common porters, would pretend to ſuperior merit to the greateſt geniuſes of the age. A robuſt body is very ſeldom joined to an extenſive underſtanding. The greateſt philoſophers, and the moſt heroic princes, have been delicate with reſpect to their perſons: and the moſt conſummate generals would, perhaps, have been very ſorry to have wreſtled with the leaſt of their ſoldiers. Look at the Pulpit, the Houſe, the Bar, or even the Stage, and anſwer, if the moſt corpulent men are the moſt ſhining ornaments to either?

Nor will the temperament of the body determine any thing. Perſons of the moſt oppoſite conſtitutions, have ſhared the voice of public fame for their abilities. The choleric, the ſanguine, and the melancholy, are certainly very different temperaments, and yet there is neither of them any impediment to genius: and ſuppoſing all the difference that is pretended between thoſe of the ſexes, there is frequently a ſtill greater difference between the temperaments of men capable of the ſame vocations or productions.

If there is any advantage with reſpect to corporal diſtinction, it moſt certainly is on the ſide of the women: the moſt curious and fineſt production in all nature, is indebted to them for its exiſtence; and their peculiar grace and beauty, make all men own them for a time their ſuperiors.

Beauty is as real an advantage as ſtrength and health, and is equally allowed by reaſon to prevail. If one would judge of its worth by the ſentiments and paſſions it excites, which is the common method of eſtimating every thing, it would be found to be

ſurpaſſed

ſurpaſſed by nought, either in price or effect; ſo greatly are the paſſions agitated, fortified, mixed, and diverſified, by the impreſſions of beauty.

In order to conſider the temperaments of the ſexes, with reſpect to vice and virtue, they muſt be conſidered in a ſtate of indifference, no way biaſſed by either. In that caſe, what was called virtue at one time, being liable to become vice in another, according to the revolutions of cuſtom, all temperaments would be equal in this reſpect. To illuſtrate this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that there is nothing but our ſoul which is capable of virtue, which conſiſts in general, in a firm and conſtant reſolution of doing what appears to us, according to different circumſtances, the beſt. The body is properly only the organ and inſtrument of this reſolution, as a ſword in one's hand to defend one's ſelf; and all the different diſpoſitions which render it more or leſs fit for this uſe, cannot be called either good or bad, but as their effects are more uſually, or more eſſentially good or bad; for inſtance, an inclination to run away, in order to avoid danger, is indifferent, as ſome dangers cannot be otherwiſe eſcaped, and it is then prudent to fly; whereas, it is a cenſurable fear to run, when the danger is to be ſurmounted by a noble reſiſtance, which produces more good than harm.

The mind is not leſs capable in women than in men, of that firm reſolution which conſtitutes virtue, or of knowing the occaſions upon which it is to be exerciſed. They have the ſame power of regulating their paſſions as the men; they are not more diſpoſed to vice than virtue; and they may be eaſily inclined to the latter. This may be concluded from their natural affection to children, which is incomparatively greater in women than in

men,

men, and which is the ſure index of compaſſion, the common virtue and tie of civil ſociety.

It neceſſarily follows, from what has been ſaid, that all the difference in the manners and diſpoſitions of the men and women, ariſes from no other cauſe but the difference in their education; and this I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate, as the laſt poſition eſſential to be proved.

The dipoſitions we bring into the world with us, are neither good nor bad; and yet how general is the error of attributing to nature, what is occaſioned by cuſtom! Inſtead of perplexing ourſelves with inquiring into the origin of our particular faults and manners, and loſing ourſelves in occult cauſes, let us take a retroſpective view of our education, ſituation, fortune, connections, and acquaintance. From hence ariſes all that diverſity in our modes of thinking; our paſſions are hereby unproportioned and inordinated; truth obſcured, and error adopted.

From this it muſt not, however, be concluded, that all mankind come into the world with the ſame corporal conſtitution: ſome are briſk and lively, others dull and heavy. This difference does not prevent the minds of both receiving the ſame inſtruction; but the one will ſpeedily and ſucceſsfully reap the benefits of it, whilſt the other is ſcarce acquainted with the nature of the ſtudy. Thus it is evident, whatever temperance of body the women have, they are not leſs ſuſceptible of truth and learning than the men; and their general ignorance, which is aſcribed to the difference of ſex, ſhould be attributed to the difference of education; to the prejudice and error they ſo early imbibe, and which no pains are ſcarce ever taken to eradicate; to the example ſet before them by their ſex; to the cuſtom of, what is ſo abſurdly called,

good-

good-breeding; to the reſtraint, ſubjection and timidity, which are impoſed upon them.

No pains are ſpared to perſuade them, that the great difference they perceive in the two ſexes, is the effect of reaſon, or divine inſtitution. Dreſs, education, and exerciſes, can ſcarce well be more oppoſite. A girl under the wing of her mother, or the eye of her governeſs who never quits her, is taught to be terrified with every thing; ghoſts and hobgoblins are firſt ſet up as the ſcare-crows of her ſenſes; the danger of going alone in the ſtreet, even at mid-day, or to church, is next inculcated, whilſt all her attention, and that of her ſervants, is paid to her dreſs and appearances; this intoxicates her with her beauty, whilſt ſhe reads novels and romances to fill her brains with love, darts, and hearts, which ſhe would never have thought of had not ſhe been told of them; theſe, with the genteel things the beaux begin to ſay to her make the girl mad; her mind is fixed upon beauty, dreſs, and conqueſt: in this condition ſhe cannot be ſuppoſed to ſearch after truth and philoſophy, which would ſhew her the vanity of her conduct, and the folly of her triumph.—Her library is her toilet; her looking glaſs her oracle; balls, plays, and intrigues, the topics of her converſation. The gay circle of a route or a hurricane, the celebrated academy, where the Sex meet for mutual inſtruction; where ſhe who has the neweſt-faſhioned cap is allowed chief of the ſect: in this conſiſts their philoſophy, their logic, and their eloquence.

With reſpect to girls, whoſe condition obliges them to work for their living, their genius is ſtill more uſeleſs to them. They are taught ſome trade or calling ſuitable to their ſex as ſoon as they come to the age of diſcretion; and the neceſſity they are in of

conſtantly attaching themſelves to it prevents their properly thinking of any thing elſe.

In all that is taught the women, is there any thing that tends to ſolid inſtruction? it would rather ſeem to be univerſally agreed giving them that kind of education which diſcourages their attempting any thing ſuperior, in order to obſcure their intellects, and fill them with vanity and folly, and thereby eradicate all ſeeds of virtue and truth, to render uſeleſs their diſpoſition for great things, and extinguiſh in them all deſire of ſignalizing themſelves for learning like the men, by debarring them of the means.

When one attends to the manner in which the defects of the women are repreſented, it muſt ſhock one to think they are the reflections of reaſonable beings. If there is equal reaſon to retaliate on the ſide of the women, the accuſer ſins againſt natural equity; if the men are ſtill worſe, though blind to their own defects, how thoughtleſs they muſt be to begin the attack; if they are conſcious of them, their ſilence proclaims their injuſtice, in cenſuring the leſs culpable. If the women are more meritorious than the men, the latter muſt own themſelves ignorant, or envious in not acknowledging it. When a perſon is more inclined to virtue than vice, the firſt is in ſome meaſure an apology for the latter, and when his defects are irremoveable, and he has not the means of ridding himſelf of them (which is the caſe with the women) he rather merits our compaſſion than contempt. In a word, if theſe defects are trifling, or only the appearances of ſuch, it is imprudent or malicious to take notice of them; nevertheleſs this is the general practice of the men with reſpect to the women.

It is pretended that they are timid and incapable of defending themſelves; that they are terrified at their very ſhadow; that they are alarmed at the cry of a child; and they tremble at the noiſe of the wind. This is far from being the caſe in general. There are numbers of women as valiant as the men. Beſide, timidity is almoſt inſeparable from virtue; worthy people who are not diſpoſed to injure any one, ſenſible of the artifices of man, cannot avoid being cautious, and even fearful. It is an univerſal paſſion which no one is exempt from; every body fears death, and the inconveniencies of life; the moſt powerful princes dread the rebellion of their ſubjects, and the invaſion of their enemies; and the moſt courageous ſoldier is not without his fears of being ſurpiſed.

Our fears are proportioned to the ſtrength we poſſeſs of defending ourſelves; and it is culpable in none but thoſe who are ſufficiently powerful to repel all attacks that may be made upon them; it would be as unreaſonable to accuſe a judge, or a man of letters, entirely devoted to ſtudy, who refuſed fighting a duel, of puſillanimity, as it would to cenſure a ſoldier, who had made arms his only employment, for not engaging in a diſpute with a ſage philoſopher.

The manner in which women are brought up, gives them reaſon to dread every thing. Devoid of learning, they are expoſed to all the artillery of logic and ſophiſtry; they have no ſhare in exerciſes of addreſs and defence. They find themſelves neceſſitated to ſuffer with impunity the outrages of a ſex ſubject to the greateſt extravagancies, who look upon them with the utmoſt contempt.

Wherefore timidity in women ſhould not be regarded as a fault, but as a reaſonable paſſion, to which they are indebted for that modeſty ſo peculiar to them, as well as the two greateſt advantages

advantages in life; an inclination for virtue, and an eſtrangement from vice. Theſe are ſolid benefits, which men with their ſtudy and learning, cannot acquire.

The fear of want is the moſt uſual ſource of avarice. Men are not leſs ſubject to it than women, and if a fair account were ſtated, I ſincerely believe that not only the majority would be on the ſide of the former, but alſo that their avarice would appear of a worſe kind. As there is but a ſmall ſtep between the oppoſite vice and virtue which hold the balance, one is frequently taken for the other, and avarice is confounded with praiſe-worthy economy.

The ſame action may be good and bad in different perſons; circumſtances decide its merit. Women are deprived of every means of making a fortune by their abilities; the ſciences and employments are both ſhut upon them; therefore being leſs able to parry the misfortunes and inconveniencies of life, they muſt neceſſarily be more affected with them. It is not ſurpriſing that they ſhould be careful of what they have got, ſince it is ſo difficult for them to acquire any more.

With reſpect to credulity, if they acquieſce ſo readily to what is told them, it is the effect of their ſimplicity, which prevents their believing that thoſe who have authority over them, ſhould either be ignorant or ſelf-intereſted; moreover it is a great infringement upon juſtice to accuſe the women of credulity, when the men are ſtill more addicted to it. The moſt cunning men are eaſily deceived by falſe appearances; and frequently their greateſt knowledge conſiſts in a moſt ſervile and implicit belief, though more extenſive than that of the women; I mean that they are no more learned than

than the women, but by reaſon of their eaſy aſſent to a greater number of things, of which they retain the ideas, by dint of poring over them.

THERE are men who think they greatly mortify the Sex, in telling them they are great talkers; and they have much reaſon to be diſpleaſed at ſo impertinent a reproach. Their bodies are ſo happily framed, that they preſerve the moſt diſtinct impreſſions of the objects which ſtrike them, they repreſent them without any difficulty, and expreſs themſelves with an admirable facility, Hence it is their ideas, being renovated at the ſlighteſt ſignal, their relations are one pleaſing concatenation of thought and repreſentation. They can never be accuſed with juſtice of being chatterers, but when they talk out of ſeaſon, and of things they are unacquainted with. But if the men had an equal volubility of ſpeech, how frequently (even ſtill more than they are at preſent) might they be convicted of ſuch practices.

CURIOSITY is, perhaps, one of the greateſt faults the men aſcribe to the women; and yet it would be difficult to decide in which ſex it moſt prevails. If the extenſiveneſs of the men's learning were to arbitrate, this umpire would be very peremptory, and the women's ignorance would, in this reſpect, at leaſt, prove a moſt perſuaſive advocate. What renders curioſity a fault, is the diſpoſition of the perſon inquired of; when he is in a communicative mood, he looks upon ſcarce any queſtion as impertinent; on the contrary, he is glad of every opportunity of diſburthening his mind, or parading his knowledge; but when in a ſullen temper, every ſentence diſpleaſes, and information as well as query is diſreliſhed.

WHEN curioſity is thus diveſted of its criminality, the women are rather to be commended than blamed for exerciſing it upon

all occaſions, where intruſion is avoided, and importunity diſmiſſed; for conſidering what ſmall means they have left of gaining a little knowledge, how frequently their intent is foiled by applying to thoſe as ignorant as themſelves, and how often they are rebuked by thoſe who intereſt themſelvesin retaining the Sex in that ſtate of ſimplicity they are, a perſeverance to endeavour at acquiring new lights muſt appear the effect of ſuch fortitude, as the men never can arrive at.

The inconſtancy and volatile diſpoſition of women, is another accuſation againſt them. There is nothing can give a ſanction to this opinion but the ſuppoſed ſuperiority of the men, and that ſex's dependant ſtate: compariſon, which decides the merit or demerit of every thing, not only refutes the propoſition, but places it in a ſtronger point of light, with reſpect to the men. But they imagine they are allowed every thing, and a woman being once united to them, the tie is to be indiſſoluble only on her ſide, although in equity and reaſon it ſhould be an equal reſtraint to both.

If we would diveſt ourſelves of prejudice, and ſeriouſly reflect upon the nature of ourſelves, we ſhould readily acquieſce that mortality implied inconſtancy; that by the ſtructure of our frames there was an indiſpenſable neceſſity for our being ſo. We judge of objects, and conclude we love or hate them, only by appearances, independant of ourſelves: and theſe very objects, in a ſmall revolution of time, appear quite different to us, either from a change in them or in ourſelves; indeed, the poet goes ſo far as to ſay,

> New paſſions, new opinions ſtill excite,
> And what we like at noon, deſpiſe at night.

But

But allowing for the hyperbole, we well know that in our infancy we are quite indifferent to many things, which a few years after are the only objects of our attention; and this is obſervable in nothing more than in love.

Now we have mentioned the tender paſſion, we ſhall go a little farther, and obſerve, that if we are beloved, it is becauſe we are thought amiable; or if diſliked, becauſe we appear diſagreeable, we find charms in a perſon, after ſome acquaintance, whom we at firſt thought diſtaſteful; and being got thus far, it is but a ſhort tranſition to ſympathize in his diſtreſs, and wiſh to relieve him—hence a mutual flame.

The agitated ſtate of mind, by the operation of contrary inclinations, with reſpect to the ſame object, plainly proves our paſſions are conſtrained; and as a trivial circumſtance may excite love, ſo may as ſlender a cauſe deſtroy it. However, the women have the prudence to conceal their diſguſt and ſeldom teſtify to the world this imperfection of their nature; for that object they have truely loved, they are ſcarce ever bereft of eſteem: whereas the firſt rupture on the ſide of the man is notified to the world by a female rival; all appearances are diſregarded; and it is looked upon as a crime to eſteem a woman he does not pretend to love any longer.

When the women are accuſed of being artful, it is rather complimenting their ſenſe than attacking their probity, even when they practiſe it by ſecret ways, in order to arrive at their ends. Capacity is requiſite to diſcover theſe means, and addreſs is neceſſary for putting them in practice. Beſide women's ſchemes are but counter-plots of intrigue, which they endeavour to execute in their own defence. But the artifices of men are far different, as well

well in their cauſe as conſequence; they generally affect ſociety, or the ſtate, and are therefore more dangerous and univerſal. The men have a variety of ways of deceiving, which the women are debarred from, ſuppoſing their inclinations inſtigated them thereto; having neither poſts, employments, or general traffic, they of courſe have ſcarce any power or wealth, which are the grand inſtruments of machination, and therefore can only work with rhetoric and careſſes, which being the moſt natural means, are alſo the moſt eaſily circumvented.

To crown the charge againſt the Sex, it is emphatically aſſerted they are more malicious and miſchievous than the men. But let us come to the proof; will any one endeavour to ſupport, that the women have done more harm than the men? the oppoſite is clearly manifeſt. It is from malverſation in high offices, miſconduct in commanders, and want of integrity in counſellors, that all public calamities ariſe; from theſe then they are exempt.

When it is ſaid the women are more malicious than the men, this can imply nothing more than that when they are diſpoſed to evil, they do it more artfully, and carry it further than the men. For the ſake of argument we will agree to this. Will not the neceſſary conſequence tend to their advantage? Being capable of doing much miſchief, ſuppoſes a great ſhare of ſenſe, and the abilities for doing much good: therefore, this reproach can affect the women no more, than in accuſing the rich of being worſe than the poor, becauſe they can be ſo; and the ſame anſwer might ſerve for both. "If we have it in our power to do a great "deal of harm, we have it equally in our power to do a great deal "of good."

From

From this ſlight diſcuſſion of the moſt notorious faults that are imputed to the women, it plainly appears, that they are not ſo great as they are vulgarly imagined; and ſmall as they are, they may be reaſonably attributed to their bad education, which being mended, their faults would of courſe be corrected.

If philoſophers had made this their rule of judging of the Sex, they would have ſpoke of them in a more reaſonable manner, and not fallen into ſuch ridiculous abſurdities. But the greateſt part of the ancients, as well as the moderns, have built their philoſophy upon popular prejudice; and being very ignorant of themſelves, it is not ſurpriſing they ſhould have been ſo little acquainted with others. The moderns, who are ſlaves to antiquity, have blindly embraced its errors, and in nothing more than in their opinions of women. It may not be amiſs to cite in this place, ſome of the moſt curious thoughts of the ancients upon this head.

Plato, the father of ancient philoſophy, thanked the Gods for three favours conferred upon him, but moſt particularly for being born a man, and not a woman. If he meant with reſpect to their preſent ſituation, he was certainly in the right; but there is reaſon to ſurmiſe, from the doubt he often expreſſed, whether women ſhould not be claſſed in the predicament of beaſts, that he gave this preference from more ulterior conſiderations. What opinion muſt reaſonable people entertain of ſuch conſummate ignorance? With what juſtice can the appellation of divine be given to ſo brutal a ſceptic?

His diſciple Ariſtotle, who ſtill retains in the ſchools the name of the Genius of Nature, upon the preſumption that he was more converſant with her than any other philoſopher, pretends that women are neither more nor leſs than monſters. Who dare diſſent

from the authority of ſo great a man? Yet if a woman, however learned ſhe might be, had wrote as much with reſpect to the men, ſhe would have ſoon loſt her ſcholaſtic credit, and it would have been thought a ſufficient refutation to have ſaid, the author was either mad, or a woman. Her aſſertion would, nevertheleſs, have had equal foundation with that of Ariſtotle. Women are as ancient as men, pretty near as numerous, and no man is ſurpriſed at meeting them. To be a monſter, according to the notion of the ſame philoſopher, it is neceſſary to have ſomething extraordinary and ſurpriſing. Women have nothing of all that; they have always been made alike; always handſome, gay, and ſprightly; and if they were not made like Ariſtotle, they might ſay Ariſtotle was not made like them.

The diſciples of this philoſopher, who lived in the time of Philo, ſupported an opinion no leſs ridiculous with reſpect to the women, in imagining, after that hiſtorian, that they were imperfect men; doubtleſs this was becauſe they are deficient in that ornament of the chin, a beard—what elſe can be underſtood by it? The ſexes to be perfect, ſhould be juſt as they are. If one reſembled the other, it would be no longer either of them. If the men are fathers of the women, the women are mothers of the men, which renders them, at laſt, equal; and one might ſay, with as much reaſon as theſe philoſophers, that men are but imperfect women.

Socrates, who was the oracle of antiquity for morality ſpeaking of the beauty of the Sex, compared it to a temple built upon a common-ſewer. This thought muſt move the riſible muſcles, if it does not affect the ſtomach. There is reaſon to believe, that he judged of the body of others by his own, or that of his wife, who was a very harpy, which made him deteſt her, and ſpeak thus of her Sex, in hopes of humbling her pride, and making her ſubmit

to

to his will; beſides this, his own uglineſs, which was complete, did not a little excite him to abuſe thoſe endowed with beauty.

Diogenes, ſurnamed the Dog, by reaſon of his diſpoſition to bite, ſeeing two women going along one day talking together, he ſaid to one of his companions, "See there two ſerpents, an "aſp and a viper, communicating their venom to one another." This, to be ſure, is a mighty curious ſpeech, and worthy the rank it holds in philoſophical ſayings!

As for the pleaſant, facetious Democritus, who loved to be merry, every thing that he ſaid muſt not be taken literally. He was very tall, and his wife very little; and being aſked one day, how he came to make ſuch a diſproportionate match, he replied, with his uſual good humour, "When one is obliged to chooſe "where there is nothing good to be had, the leaſt is always beſt." If one had aſked his wife the ſame queſtion, ſhe might with as much reaſon have replied, "That as a great and a little huſband, "were much the ſame as to their goodneſs, ſhe had taken her's at "hap-hazard, for fear of getting the worſt by chooſing."

Cato, that wiſe and ſevere critic, frequently ſupplicated the Gods to pardon him, if he had been ſo imprudent as to truſt any ſecret to a woman. The good man had certainly always in his head a famous paſſage in the Roman hiſtory, which the lovers of antiquity are ever quoting, to ſhew the little prudence and reſerve of the women, and how natural it is for them to blab a ſecret. A child of twelve years old, greatly ſolicited by his mother, to tell her the reſolutions of the ſenate, where he had been, to appeaſe her, ſaid, it was reſolved to give every man ſeveral wives. She immediately ran to her female neighbours to concert meaſures with them, and all the city knew it in leſs than half an hour. I

ſhould

ſhould be curious to know what a huſband would do in a ſtate where the women were miſtreſſes, upon hearing that it had been reſolved in council, for every woman to take half a dozen huſbands? Doubtleſs he would not open his lips about it.

* HERE, then, are ſome of the greateſt and moſt ſublime thoughts upon the Fair Sex of thoſe whom the learned look upon as oracles; and what is diverting and ridiculous at the ſame time, is, that men of the moſt grave turn, ſeriouſly repeat what theſe famous ancients ſaid frequently in raillery. So true it is, that prejudice and pre-occupation, give riſe to the greateſt errors amongſt the higheſt, moſt reaſonable, and judicious of men.

THE END.

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